

NEWS AGENCY ROLE VIEWED

Mutual Protection Of Facts Is Held Purpose Of AP

The president of the Associated Press last night called the news-gathering organization an agency of mutual protection against the evils of controlled news.

Benjamin M. McKelway, who also is editor of the Washington *Star*, said the purpose of the AP "is the only purpose which could unite the independent newspapers of this country in anything—that purpose being the gathering, exchange and distribution of the straight news of what has happened."

Mr. McKelway spoke to a combined dinner meeting of the Chesapeake Association of the AP and the Maryland Press Association at the Lord Baltimore Hotel.

"Only News Acceptable"

He said, "straight news is the only news acceptable to a press representing every conceivable political, economic and social point of view in a free society."

"The news itself may reflect these various points of view but it must be told in a way that favors no point of view.

"It was that hard fact rather than idealism which brought about the development of the straight news reporting now recognized as a treasured characteristic of the Associated Press. And it is that type of reporting that best serves the principle of a free press guaranteed in our Constitution."

Members Are Proprietors

Mr. McKelway said the members of the Associated Press are its proprietors, and, as such, they must be ever watchful of the product the AP produces.

He reminded the two groups that while the AP is the world's largest news agency (with 7,000 employees of its own) it still depends on member newspapers and radio stations for most of its news.

These members, he said, must often rely upon partially trained reporters or unskilled observers for much of their information. He then added:

"It is nothing short of remarkable to me that so few errors of fact or of judgment are made in the daily business of conducting the AP's news operations. For these operations, involve the gathering, editing and distribution of the news, under the unrelenting pressures of closing deadlines, to 6,000 newspaper, radio and television members and subscribers in 70 countries around the world.

Association Elects

"Anyone who understand the complexities of news gathering must respect the relative freedom from important error which is a highly prized quality of the Associated Press, reflecting great credit on the men and women who compose its staff," Mr. McKelway said.

Earlier in the day, the Maryland Press Association elected **Gertrude Poe**, of the *Laurel News-Leader*, as its president, succeeding Oscar Morris of the *Salisbury Times*.

Elected vice president for dailies was J. Stephen Becker, of the *Baltimore News-Post*. William Kerbin, Jr., of the *Snow Hill Democrat-Messenger*, was named vice president for weeklies.

Friendly Elected

E. Ralph Hostetter, of the *Cecil Whig* in Elkton, was named secretary, and Elmer M. Jackson 3d, of the *Glen Burnie Maryland Gazette*, was elected treasurer.

The Chesapeake Association of the AP elected Alfred Friendly, managing editor of the *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, president.

Elmer M. Jackson, Jr., general manager of the *Annapolis Evening Capital*, was elected vice president, and Max Fullerton, AP chief of the bureau for Maryland and West Virginia, was named secretary.

The retiring president of the association is Fred I. Archibald, publisher of the *Baltimore News-Post and Sunday American*.